

every flavour of strategy



apg creative strategy
awards 2025



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STRATEGY BOOK

Content

- 1 | Every Flavour of Strategy
- 2 | Long Term Thinking Category
- 3 | The Special Prizes
- 4 | What you need to know
- 5 | Judging Criteria
- 6 | Important Dates
- 7 | How to write your paper
- 8 | Submitting your paper
- 9 | Payment Details
- 10 | Rules and Information
- 11 | Ethics & Spirit
- 12 | Questions



APG Creative Strategy Awards

Every Flavour of Strategy

The APG Creative Strategy Awards represent the very best of our discipline. They celebrate magic *and* logic. Imagination *and* effectiveness. The bonkers and the unexpected as much as the elegant and rigorous.

This year, we seek a rich variety of diverse and compelling cases that showcase the vast spectrum of creative strategy from brilliant minds everywhere. Because the awards are for all of us: to inspire, to educate, and ultimately to raise the bar on the work we put out into the world.

So whether you're from a large agency or a small one; whatever your experience level and wherever you're located, we want to hear your story.



Long Term Thinking Category

Sponsored by ITV



Long Term Thinking is a category in the 2025 APG Creative Strategy Awards and you can enter a paper explicitly into that category.

Long Term Thinking is a campaign for a brand that has run for 5 years plus and is still running.

We will be awarding the strategic thinking that has successfully guided the brand or business over that time.

You can enter a brand or campaign for both the Long Term Thinking category and the 2025 (three year) awards if you so wish; the thrust of the entries will be very different.

The Long Term Thinking entries can use up to 3,000 words as opposed to the 2,000 word limit on the other papers.

Long Term Thinking papers will be judged as a separate category at shortlisting and final judging. Shortlisting judges will nominate the papers they think worthy of an award.

However, the overall limit on numbers going through to final judging remains the same at 25 or 26.

The final judges will award Gold, Silver or Bronze based on the points system like all other papers that are shortlisted.

Entry guidelines and costs will be the same as the Creative Strategy Awards.



The Special Prizes & Sponsors


If your paper is shortlisted, there are several Special Prizes that it can also win:

Denise Williams Prize for Best Performance in Front of the Judges 

The Nursery Prize for Best Contribution to Brand Growth 

Strategy Book Prize for Best Written Paper 

Davies+McKerr Prize for Best Insight 

Thinkbox Prize for Delivering Cultural Impact 

Tracksuit Prize for Best Use of Data to Drive Brand Effectiveness 

Best Strategic Response to the Challenge of Climate Change

Best Media Thinking

Best Example of Diversity & Inclusion

PR Special Prize

Best Global Thinking
(more than one market, ex-UK)

Best Non-UK paper

Best Example of CX Thinking

Best use of AI in Creative Strategy

'The one that got away' Special Prize*

*not part of agency points

What you need to know

Important information you need to know if you are going to enter the APG Creative Strategy Awards 2025. Here are some key points:

Entrants must be members of the APG. If there is more than one author at least one must be an APG member. (For authors from outside the UK, this rule does not apply)

The creative work must have appeared in market between 31st March 2022 and 30th March 2025.

Your entry must be approved by the senior management of all the companies involved in the submission and by your senior client who has approved the entire contents of your paper for publication. You must submit the full names of the approvals with your entry.

World copyright of each entry will pass to the APG and it is the responsibility of the author(s) to ensure that the approvals mentioned above are adequate for this purpose.

If your paper is shortlisted, you will be expected to present your case to the judges on either 2nd or 3rd July 2025 – either in person in London or by video call. If an author is not present at final judging, their paper will be disqualified.

Shortlisted papers will be published by the APG as “APG Creative Strategy Awards winners”. All papers entered into the competition may be published online or in book form by the APG or by WARC at the discretion of the APG.

The **deadline for entries is Thursday 3rd April at 3pm BST**. Any papers submitted after that date and time will not qualify for entry.

Please read the section ‘Detailed Rules’ for full details.



Judging Criteria

There are two judging stages – a written paper and a presentation (face-to-face or video call). There is a maximum of 50 marks available at each stage. Allocation of marks at each stage will be made according to the following four judging criteria:

Written Paper

How compelling is the story i.e. how effectively have you expressed the overall thinking and idea (written case)? **20 marks**

How strong is the creative strategy? **20 marks**

How much do I wish I'd done it? (The jealousy factor) **5 marks**

How 'useful' is the case/the learning, and/or could it be reapplied? **5 marks**

Final Judging Presentation

Does the story stand up to scrutiny? **20 marks**

How strong is the creative strategy? **20 marks**

How far do I wish I had done that? **5 marks**

How useful is it? **5 marks**

Important Dates

Here are all the important dates you need to note if you are entering the awards.

Submissions Close

Date: Thursday 3rd April 2025
Deadline: 3pm BST

Shortlisting

May-June

Shortlist Announced

Date: Thursday 12th June 2025

Final Judging Presentations

Dates: 2nd and 3rd July 2025

Awards Ceremony & Winners Announced

Date: 25th September 2025

How to write your paper

Here is some information about what to include in your paper:

Title Page

- Paper title
- 250 word summary (not included in the final word count)
- 1 image to represent your paper

Final Page

- Total word count
 - Creative Strategy Award = maximum 2,000 words
 - Long Term Thinking Award = maximum 3,000 words

Total Number of Pages*

- Creative Strategy Awards = 10
- Long Term Thinking Awards = 12

*Title page not included

Important things to note:

- If you are shortlisted, you will need to send us your paper in a word document directly following the shortlist announcement in June 2025 in order to be published in the book.
- Worldwide copyright and right to publish in digital and printed forms of each entry will pass to the APG and it is the responsibility of the author(s) to ensure that the approvals supplied are adequate for this purpose and that all data, images and information included in the paper will be published.



Submitting your paper

All papers will be uploaded through our online submission portal. You will need to fill out information for each paper submitted (* = Required):

Please choose the type of award you are submitting*:

- APG Creative Strategy Award
- APG Long Term Thinking Award

Please provide the following information (* = required):

- Full Name of Primary Author*:
- APG Membership Number of Primary Author* (not applicable for entries outside the UK):
- Additional Authors:
- Brand*:
- Client*:
- Title of the Paper*:
- Agency Name*:
- Agency Address*:
- Full Name of Approving Agency CSO/Senior Management*:
- Full Name of Approving Senior Client*:

Note: all author names provided will be credited on the paper.

Payment Details

Here are some details about the cost of entry. Please note - If you submit 4 papers the 5th is free:

Submitting inside the UK

Each primary author will need to be an active member of the APG. Your email and membership number are both needed to access the awards portal.

If you are not a member, you will need to purchase membership along with your submission.

Entry fee = £1,100+vat

APG Membership = 230+vat

Submitting outside the UK

You do not need APG membership if you live outside of the UK and are submitting a paper.

Entry fee = £1,100 (+vat if applicable)

Rules & Information

Please read the Detailed Rules before you submit a paper to the APG Creative Strategy Awards.

1. Entrants must be members of the APG. If there is more than one author at least one must be an APG member. (For authors from outside the UK, this rule does not apply)
2. The APG member(s) must be the presenter(s) to the final jury if the paper is shortlisted. If an author is not present at final judging, virtually or in person, their paper will be disqualified. (More about this in rule 15).
3. Your paper must be in written form. For Creative Strategy Awards it must not exceed 10 pages and 2,000 words. For Long Term Thinking Awards it must not exceed 12 pages and 3,000 words. Please state the word-count at the end of your paper. If you are shortlisted, you will need to send us your paper in a word document directly following the shortlist announcement in June 2025 in order to be published in the book.
4. You must provide a summary of the paper (maximum 250 words) along with 1 image to represent your paper on your title page. This summary is not included in your final word count.
5. The creative work must have appeared in market between 31st March 2022 and 30th March 2025.
6. Your entry must be approved by the senior management of all the companies involved in the submission and by your senior client who has approved the entire contents of your paper for publication. You must submit the full names of the approvals with your entry, using the entry form.
7. Someone who has left an agency may write a paper under their own name on behalf of that agency, subject to agency and client approval.
8. An agency may submit a paper if the client has since left the agency, provided they have approval and sign-off from that client.
9. Where a person who worked on the strategy is no longer with the agency, then the paper may still be submitted by the agency providing that there is no misleading information about the origin of the ideas.
10. An agency may enter jointly with another agency and such collaboration is welcomed.
11. All entries will be submitted online.
12. All papers must be written in English and suitable translations of the work must be provided to allow English-speakers to judge the entry.
13. Each entry must be accompanied by a completed entry form and payment of the appropriate fee.
14. The entry fee is £1,100 per paper plus VAT at 20%. A VAT receipt will be issued. Fees must be paid in GBP using the online payment system provided. If you submit 4 papers the 5th is free. If you have to withdraw your paper once it has been uploaded, the fee will be non-refundable. No paper can be cleared for judging unless the entry fee has been paid in full by the deadline.
15. If your paper is shortlisted, you will be expected to present your case to the judges in July 2025 – either in person in London or by video call. If an author is not present at final judging, their paper will be disqualified.
16. For winning papers, presentation of the Award trophy will be to the principal author. Co-authors and contributing thinkers will be credited and will have the option of purchasing further trophies.
17. World copyright of each entry will pass to the APG and it is the responsibility of the author(s) to ensure that the approvals supplied under Rule 6 are adequate for this purpose.
18. Shortlisted papers will be published by the APG as “APG Creative Strategy Awards winners”. All papers entered into the competition may be published online or in book form by the APG or by WARC at the discretion of the APG.
19. Any data or information that you use to support your thinking must be included in the paper. You may not redact or hide data.
20. For copyright purposes, you will need to source or credit images that do not belong to you or your organisation.
21. Amendments and additions to these rules, if any, will be published on this APG website.

Ethics & Spirit

1. We're going to be as open as possible – within the limits of decency, commercial confidentiality and keeping it an exciting and fair competition. So like last time we're publishing the criteria we'll be using to judge papers and how many marks each criterion carries. And, after the event, you can find out how your paper scored.

2. This year, we seek a rich variety of diverse and compelling cases that showcase the vast spectrum of creative strategy from brilliant minds everywhere. Because the awards are for all of us: to inspire, to educate, and ultimately to raise the bar on the work we put out into the world. So whether you're from a large agency or a small one; whatever your experience level and wherever you're located, we want to hear your story.

3. Additionally, the Awards will have a truly international reach so that we showcase the best thinking worldwide, and therefore will embrace papers from around the world and make it easier for non-UK-resident Planners to take part. The Grand Prix has been won by papers from outside the UK in 2011, 2013, and 2017.

4. As usual there will be two judging stages – a written paper and a presentation (face-to-face if possible, with the option of video call). The written stage will count for half the total marks. The second and final judging stage will consist of a 5 minute recap of the salient points of the paper by the author(s) followed by up to 15 minutes of questions and discussion with the judges. This second stage represents the other half of the total marks.

5. The Shortlisting Panel will mark every paper and those with the highest scores based on the quality of the written argument will go forward to the final judging stage where marks will be awarded as outlined below. The Grand Prix and the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards will be based on the total marks achieved over both judging stages.

6. The chair of final judges and chair of shortlisters will work closely together to make sure that there is cohesion between the two stages. The chair of shortlisters will be on the final judging panel.

7. Although they may write or co-author a paper, no juror on the final judging panel may present a paper or be in the room when it is being discussed.

8. There is a maximum of 50 marks available at each stage. Allocation of marks at each stage will be made according to the following four judging criteria:

Written paper

- How compelling is the story i.e. how effectively have you expressed the overall thinking and idea (written case)? **20 marks**
- How strong is the creative strategy? **20 marks**
- How much do I wish I'd done it? (The jealousy factor) **5 marks**
- How 'useful' is the case/the learning, and/or could it be reapplied? **5 marks**

Final Judging Presentation

- Does the story stand up to scrutiny? **20 marks**
- How strong is the creative strategy? **20 marks**
- How far do I wish I had done that? **5 marks**
- How useful is it? **5 marks**

9. There will be no "categories" (except the Long Term Thinking category) and we will focus on the intrinsic quality of each entry. Every paper that makes it to the final judging stage will be awarded Gold, Silver or Bronze, and the best Gold paper will win the Grand Prix. In addition, there will be a number of special prizes. As in previous years, we will award the Stephen King Trophy to the most successful agency – crowning them the APG Strategy Agency of the Year.

10. Each award qualifies for points, and the agency office (not network) with the most points will be the Stephen King Strategy Agency Of The Year.

- A Gold will win **7 points**
- A Silver, **3 points**
- A Bronze, **2 points**
- A Special Award, **1 point**
- and the Grand Prix, **9 points** (i.e. 2 points in addition to 7 for Gold)

11. The lead agency must be nominated on the entry form so that it is clear which agency is able to accrue any points towards Strategy Agency of the Year. In addition, that agency office must have been responsible for devising the strategy that the entry describes.



Questions

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to get in touch with us:

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